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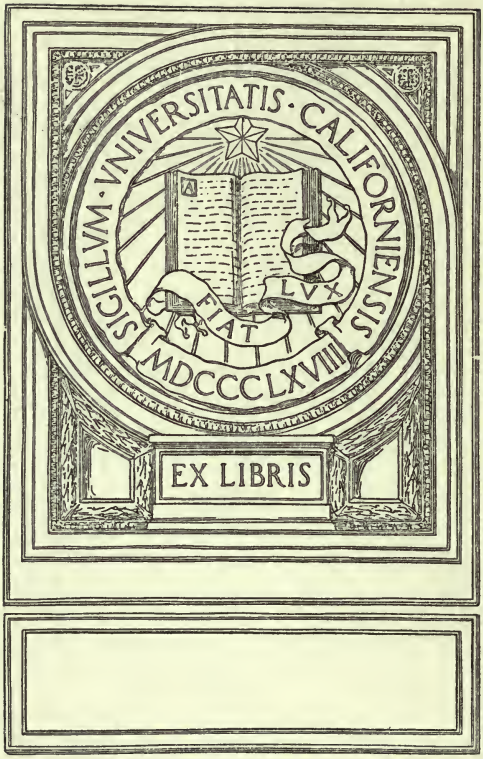
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*Congress of Archæological Societies in Union with the Society of Antiquaries. July 3rd, 1907.*

# On a Scheme for Rendering

# THE CHARTERS AND MSS.

IN THE

# Various Repositories available for County Purposes.

**By Professor W. A. COPINGER, F.S.A.**

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IN fulfilment of my promise to comply with the request of the Congress (being unable to address them, as I should have wished, in London), I proceed to place on paper a few notes for consideration on the subject of the gathering together in a series of volumes the substance of everything relating to the particular county in the nature of an historical or official character, dealing mainly with Charters, Records and MSS.

There are undoubtedly thousands of MSS. and documents hidden away in our great collections unknown, save through official publications, and for all practical purposes beyond the reach of those who have neither time nor opportunity of wading through an enormous mass of irrelevant material.

My thirty or forty years' experience of the study of County History demonstrates that no satisfactory advance can be made on the existing histories save by tapping the original sources of authority, and that this cannot be done but by some such scheme as I have carried out in the case of the County

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of Suffolk. I quite admit that this work is not exhaustive, but I have merely been deterred from making it practically so by reason of the expense and the impossibility of a private individual obtaining from a poor county the necessary financial support.

It seems absolutely necessary that each county should have this work undertaken for it. No satisfactory history of the county, or indeed of any particular place in, or family connected with it, can be undertaken with assurance that it will prove exhaustive until this initiative work has been effected.

The particular Records and MSS. which I consider should be worked on with the object of extracting the substance therefrom of matters relating to the particular county are set forth in my "Introductory Note" to the 1st Vol. of my "Records of Suffolk." Considering, however, the little support the work has received, and that less than 100 copies have been sold, it is probable that few have seen this work. Consequently I give the following extracts :—

"The substance of all matters relating to Suffolk in the publications of the Record Commissioners, the reports during the last 60 years of the Deputy Keeper, the Calendars, and other issues of the Public Record Office, and in the State Papers, are brought together in the present work, and form with the Index to the MSS. and Charters its backbone. The scope will, perhaps, be better grasped if the principal sources are specified. In the British Museum—the Sloane, the Cottonian, the Harleian, the Royal, the Lansdowne, the Burney, the King's, the Egerton, the Arundel and Additional MSS., including in these the smaller collections of Birch, Burrell, Cole, Gough, Hasted, Davy, Jermyn, Wolley, Mitchell, Ward, Banks, Mangey, Chandler, Kerrick, Lysons, Upcott, and others are drawn on. The great collections of Tanner, Rawlinson, Digby, Gough, Douce and others, and the general MSS. Charters and Rolls in the Bodleian, the Baker and other MSS. in the University Library, Cambridge, and the MSS. in the various college libraries have been laid under

tribute. The Statute of the Realm—public, private, local and personal, and the Rolls of Parliament from 6 Edw. I to the reign of Henry VIII, the *London Gazette*, and the House of Lords and Commons' Journals have yielded much fruit. Of the Old Record Publications full use has been made. All the entries in any way connected with the county of Suffolk, families or individuals in the Domesday Survey, Testa de Nevill, the Hundred Rolls, the Quo Warranto Rolls, the Charter Rolls, the Originalia, the Patent and Close Rolls before the recent issue (*i.e.*, prior to the time of Edw. I), the Inquisitions post mortem, the Proceedings in Chancery, &c., have been translated and the substance extracted. From the Inquisitions alone there are over 4,000 references. . . . The valuable series of lists and indexes issued by the Record Office, in order to make the contents of that office more available, have been examined, and matters and references relating to Suffolk extracted. . . . In addition to the above matters all the entries in the Black Book and Red Book of the Exchequer, and in the calendars of the Patent and Close Rolls issued in recent years have been arranged under the several places—the substance of each entry and roll being given. . . . In addition to these, the items relating to Suffolk have been extracted from the following: The Calendars of State Papers, Domestic Series, Home Office Papers and Treasury Papers, Acts of the Privy Council, &c., Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds preserved in the Public Record Office, 4 vols., 1890-1901; Catalogue of the Arundel MSS. in the College of Arms, 1829, by C. G. Young; the Reports of the Historical MSS. Commissioners; Jones's Index to the Originalia and Memoranda of the Exchequer, 2 vols., 1793; and the Index to the Ipswich Wills, 1444 to 1478. The material thus gathered together, with a note of the histories of, guides to, and printed accounts in connection with any parish (which will be found mentioned under the particular place), has been arranged under one alphabet, topographically. References are also given to Suffolk matters in 'Notes and

Queries,' in the 'East Anglian Notes and Queries,' in Archæologia, in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, the publications of the British Archæological Association, the Archæological Institute, the Suffolk Institute, and the topographical portion of the 'Gentlemen's Magazine.'

"In the arrangement of the slips chronological order has been adopted where a date is given, all the undated entries coming first in an analytical order. In the case of the large entries under Bury and Ipswich, a special arrangement to facilitate reference has been adopted. The variations in the spelling of the different names in the documents referred to are given and a complete set of cross references to places. For pedigrees, the Index of Mr. Sims (Lond., 1849) and the Index to those in the Davy Collection, which appeared some years back in 'The East Anglian Notes and Queries,' have been incorporated, as also references given to Burke's Landed Gentry for Suffolk families, and for individuals to the Dictionary of National Biography."

It is, I consider, essential that all heraldic and genealogical matters should be fully entered, and in fact material furnished for the history of every town, parish, manor and hamlet in the county, and particulars given of every family and individual of note connected with it.

I do not consider that a mere index or catalogue would suffice to meet the present need. It is absolutely necessary that at least in the majority of cases the substance of the record or document referred to should be given, and the double object secured of providing data substantially, and indicating where further and fuller information may be obtained.

Judgment must, of course, be exercised as to what should be given, but it is far better to give what may be unnecessary than to omit what possibly might be of value.

I have not, as a rule, relied on the indexes to the Government publications, accurate though they be, but gone through the volume from cover to cover, as, in the long run, I conceive time is saved and accuracy secured.

My scheme originally was just an index to the MSS. and Charters in the British Museum, the Oxford and Cambridge Libraries, the publications of the Record Commission, and the Deputy Keeper, but I soon found the scheme growing under treatment and gradually developing. I do not think I am far wrong in stating that there must be something like 30,000 MSS. in the British Museum and in the Oxford and Cambridge Libraries alone, relating directly or indirectly to the County of Suffolk. Undoubtedly a mass of MS. matter exists never used by the several county historians.

Further, new sources of information have been opened for the first time, or at least made easy of access in the present day. When one considers the value of the Patent and Close Rolls series now being issued and of the several Calendars and Indexes prepared by the Public Record Office, one becomes alive to the great mass of material thus placed in an accessible form.

It is easy to work one county at a time, and it may be of some interest to enter a little more into details.

The 5 vols. of the Suffolk MSS. and Records (an Index, the proof of the last page of which was before me this day, runs to about 330 pages, will form a sixth vol.) I have issued took about three years to compile, working mostly between eight o'clock at night and three in the morning. It is by no means so stupendous a matter as it might appear to some. In a few cases I had the work to be extracted from looked through and the entries relating to the County marked by the insertion of a piece of paper between the leaves. Each entry was placed on a separate card, of which I must have had in use at various times about 100,000, and every night what was done during the evening sorted so that the work should not run behind in this respect, and the sorting was simplified by the substance of the written entry being still in the mind of the sorter during the operation. The entries were arranged alphabetically under places and chronologically *inter se.* The manors and the churches I invariably separated from the main

entries relating to the place, and there was a further division including the place in question with other places. Two or three thousand cross references I had to take out to save expense in printing—but this will be made good by the index.

The cards were $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 3 in., and cost *2s. 6d.* per 1,000. The cards relating to each place were held together by elastic bands so as to allow fresh cards containing new entries to be readily introduced in their proper place. I made special pigeon-holes for keeping the cards in; these holes being a little larger than the size of the card, each division about a foot high and slightly broader than the card. The divisions were about 100 in number. Four long inch boards and small pieces for the divisions, ordered to be cut to the right size and so delivered, enabled the whole case to be put together in one evening.

I am rather particular in the details, as it was the consideration given to these from the start which enabled the work to be run through in so short a space of time. I estimate that had I used paper instead of cards, besides the trouble and the difficulty in substituting and writing fresh entries, the execution of the work would have at least involved an extra year of labour. I should mention that I had the help of my children in sorting in the morning what I failed to sort at night, and also in the re-writing and the putting in cross references. I found that the printing in London entailed too heavy an expenditure, and had the work done by Manchester printers. It is not that I could not have obtained an estimate in London almost as low as in Manchester, but the cost would have ultimately proved, as I have learnt by experience, probably a third higher. London printers run up a heavy bill for alterations and so-called corrections; here my payment on these heads was practically nothing. The cost was under £3 per sheet of 16 pages for 250 copies; consequently the cost of printing and binding each volume was about £100. There were about eighty subscribers at £1 1*s.* a volume. Practically

nothing has been sold since publication, but then not a single advertisement, I believe, has appeared in any paper.

In order to demonstrate that a history of the County or any place therein *can* be written or compiled exhaustively from entries made in the way I have indicated I have actually written seven volumes folio on the Manors of Suffolk, of which the first volume has already been published. This work I did in my spare time in about two years, and without such an assistance as my 5 vols. of Records afforded, such a work as that on the Manors, tracing them, or a large proportion, from the Conquest to the present time—a history dealing with something like 1,500 Manors—could not have been compiled in many years, and then there would have been no absolute assurance of its being exhaustive, and what is of even greater importance there would have been no opportunity for the author to take a bird's eye view of the whole material before consideration of the parts—no possibility of comparing entries under one place with entries under others—in short of testing them one with another in such a mode as to bring the sources of information and authority into a concentrated form.

However, I must conclude with the expression of the hope that I have met the desire of the Council so far as in my power, and on the lines they have indicated.

W. A. COPINGER.

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The following is a list of the contractions employed in the above work :—

A.—Ancient Deeds in Exchequer and Treasury of the Receipt, P.R.O.
Abbr. of Pl.—Abbreviation of Pleas, Ric. I. to Edw. II. 1811.
Acts of P.C.—Calendar of Acts of Privy Council, 1542–1800.
Add.—Additional MSS., British Museum.
Add. Ch.—Additional Charters, British Museum.
A.J.—The Archæological Journal.
All Souls.—All Souls College, Oxford.
App.—Appendix.
Arch.—Archæologia of the Society of Antiquaries.
Arund.—Arundel MSS., British Museum.
Ashm.—Ashmolean MSS., British Museum.

B.—Ancient Deeds in Exchequer, Court of Augmentations, P.R.O.
B.A.A.—Publications of the British Archæological Association.
Baker.—Baker MSS., Cambridge University Library.
Bal.—Baliol College, Oxford.
Bodl.—Bodleian, Oxford.
Bodl. Ch.—Bodleian Charters } by Turner and Cox, 1878.
Bodl. Rolls.—Bodleian Rolls }
Bridges.—Bridges' Collection, Bodleian.
Burke L.G.—Burke's Landed Gentry, Ed. 1901.
C.—Ancient Deeds in Court of Chancery, P.R.O.
C.A.—Collectanea Archæologia.
Caius.—Caius College, Cambridge.
Camb.—Cambridge University Library.
Campb.—Campbell MSS., British Museum.
C.C.C.—Christ's Church College, Oxford.
Chart. Rolls.—Calendarium Rotulorum Chartarum, 1 vol., 1803.
Cott.—Cottonian MSS., British Museum.
D.—Ancient Deeds of the Remembrancer's Dept. of Exchequer, P.R.O.
D.K.R.—Deputy-Keeper's Annual Reports, 1840 to 1902.
D.N.B.—Dictionary of National Biography.
Dom.—Domesday Book, 1783.
E.A.—The East Anglian Notes and Queries—(N.S.) New Series.
E.C.P.—Early Chancery Proceedings, Vol. I. (1901), P.R.O.
Eger.—Egerton MSS. and Rolls, British Museum.
Exon.—Exeter College, Oxford.
Gough.—Gough Collection, Bodleian.
Gent. M.—Gentleman's Magazine.
Harl.—Harleian MSS., 4 vols., 1808 to 1812, and Harl., followed by a number and a letter, Harleian Charters, British Museum.
H.L.—Journals of House of Lords.
H.O.P.—Home Office Papers, t., Geo. III., 4 vols., 1878–9, 1881, 1899.
H.R.—Hundred Rolls, 2 vols., 1812, P.R.O.
Hist. Com.—Historical MSS., Commissioners' Reports, 1870 to 1903.
I.P.M.—Inquisitiones post mortem, 4 vols., 1806, 1807, 1821, 1828.
I.Q.D.—Inquisitiones ad quod damnum, 1803.
Jes.—Jesus College, Oxford.
Lansd.—Lansdowne MSS., British Museum Catalogue, 1819.
L.G.—*London Gazette*, 1830 to 1902.
M.—The "Memoranda" of the Exchequer as Indexed by Jones, 1793.
Magd.—Magdalen College, Oxford.
N. & Q.—Notes and Queries, from 1849.
O.—Rotulorum Originalium, Hen. III.-Edw. III., 2 vols., 1805, 1810, and Jones's Publication in 1793.
P.C.—Proceedings in Chancery, Ric. II. to Eliz., 3 vols, 1827 to 1832*, and 1558 to 1579 (1896).
* (The reference is to these volumes of printed Calendar and not to the Rolls direct.)
P. & O. of P.C.—Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council.
Pat. Rolls.—Patent Rolls Cal., 1802, 1891 to 1903.
Pipe.—Pipe Rolls.
P.R.O.—Public Record Office.
P.S.A.—Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries.
Queens—Queen's College, Oxford.
Q.W —The Quo Warranto Rolls.
Rawl.—Rawlinson MSS., Bodleian.
Royal.—Royal Collection, British Museum.
R.P.—Rolls of Parliament.
S.I.—The Publications of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology.
Sloa.—Sloane MSS., British Museum.
Star C.P.—Star Chamber Proceedings, 1485 to 1558, Vol. I., 1901.
S.P. Cal. of Comp.—Calendar of Committee for Compounding, &c., 1643 to 1660, Pt. I. to V.
S.P.—Calendar of State Papers, 1856 to 1902.
Stowe.—Stowe MSS., British Museum.
Tanner.—Tanner MSS., Bodleian.
T. de N.—Testa de Nevill, 1807.
Toph.—Topham MSS., British Museum.
Willis.—Willis Collection, Bodleian.
Woll.—Wolley MSS., British Museum.

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